

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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54

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 PM-04 NSC-05

SP-02 SS-15 L-03 AID-05 PC-10 INR-07 /058 W

----- 070680

O 101233Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY COTONOU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 8251

CONFIDENTIAL COTONOU 0439

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, DM, US

SUBJ: FUTURE OF US-BENIN RELATIONS

REF (A) STATE 57761, (B) COTONOU 429, (C) STATE 55153,

1. REPLY TO REF A BEING DRAWN UP AND WILL BE SUBMITTED SHORTLY. IN MEANTIME WISH TO PROPOSE FOR DEPT'S URGENT CONSIDERATION PROPOSAL THAT WE FRANKLY APPRISE THE GPRB OF POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES OF FAILURE TO PROVIDE ASSURANCES WE HAVE REQUESTED. UP TO NOW WE HAVE BEEN SPECIFICALLY ENJOINED FROM MAKING THIS POINT TO THEM (PER PARA 2 OF REF C).

2. ALL INDICATIONS EMBASSY HAS BEEN ABLE TO GATHER FROM FOREIGN MINISTRY, MOST RECENT OF WHICH WAS CHARGE'S CONVERSATION MARCH 8 WITH DIRGEN OF MINISTRY, LEAVE CLEAR IMPRESSION THAT GPRB DOES NOT APPRECIATE THE IMPORTANCE USG ATTACHED TO THE ASSURANCE QUESTION AND DID NOT FEEL CONSTRAINED TO REPLY TO DEPSEC'S PROTEST. THERE ARE SEVERAL INSTANCES IN THE PAST YEAR WHERE GPRB HAS FAILED TO REPLY TO OUR PROTEST NOTES (USUALLY ON PRESS ATTACKS AGAINST USG) AND IT PROBABLY CONSIDERS IGNORING PROTESTS ACCEPTABLE PRACTICE. AFTER THE CHARGE'S MARCH 8 MEETING WE ARE CERTAIN THAT AT LEAST THE DIRGEN UNDERSTANDS THAT THE MATTER OF ASSURANCES IS KEY TO THE FUTURE OF OUR RELATIONS. WHAT WE DO NOT BELIEVE THE GPRB REALIZES IS THE POSSIBLE SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES IT FACES IF ASSURANCES ARE NOT FORTHCOMING.

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3. IT MUST BE KEPT IN MIND THAT WE ARE DEALING WITH A GOVT

MADE UP OF MEN WITH VERY LIMITED FORMAL EDUCATION, WHO ARE UNSOPHISTICATED, DISTRUSTFUL AND DEFENSIVE IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS. WE KNOW FROM PAST EXPERIENCE THAT THEY CANNOT BE EXPECTED TO READ BETWEEN THE LINES OR SEIZE IMPLICATIONS THAT ARE NOT SPELLED OUT FOR THEM.

4. ACTION REQUESTED: AS THE GPRB HAS PROBABLY NOT GRASPED THE POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES OF THE SITUATION FACING IT, THE COUNTRY TEAM STRONGLY RECOMMENDS THAT DEPT AUTHORIZE CHARGE TO SEEK IMMEDIATE MEETING WITH FORNMIN TO APPRISE HIM DIRECTLY OF OUR GRAVE CONCERNS AND TO OUTLINE FOR HIM SOME OF THE ACTIONS BEING CONSIDERED BY THE USG. IF AFTER SUCH A MEETING, THE GPRB STILL DOES NOT COME UP WITH ADEQUATE ASSURANCES, THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR SUBSEQUENT USG ACTION WILL REST SQUARELY ON THE BEININESE GOVT.

CHESSES

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN RELATIONS, POLICIES, DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS, DIPLOMATIC PROTESTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 10 MAR 1976
Decapton Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decapton Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: coburnhl
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976COTONO00439
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760090-0891
From: COTONOU
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760377/aaaacpoi.tel
Line Count: 77
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 STATE 57761, 76 COTONOU 429, 76 STATE 55153
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: coburnhl
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22 JUN 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <22 JUN 2004 by greeneet>; APPROVED <05 OCT 2004 by coburnhl>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FUTURE OF US-BENIN RELATIONS
TAGS: PFOR, DM, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006